

103 Vails Gate Heights Drive
New Windsor, NY 12553

2163 September 7, 1999
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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers La., Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Sirs:

I am writing to comment on three docket nos. 98N-1230, 96P-0418, and 97P-0197. The information below expresses my views on reducing salmonella in eggs.

Every year, when egg production drops, approximately 195 million hens in North America endure a bizarre torment called forced molting. This cruel practice throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking their worn-out bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being sent to slaughter. The frightened birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted for up to eight weeks and they are kept in pitch dark for weeks on end. As a result, hundreds of thousands die while those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile, broken limbs.

Recent research, including a study conducted by U.S. government scientists, show that forced molting can be harmful to humans as well. The studies show that forced molting increases the frequency and severity of Salmonella enteritidis among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

I am aware that the FDA is looking for ways to reduce salmonella in eggs and is asking for comments on the matter. The most effective and direct way to reduce salmonella in eggs would be to eliminate the practice of forced molting. Simply putting warning labels on egg cartons and regulating egg refrigeration temperatures is not enough. It is the diseased birds producing the contaminated eggs that is causing the high incidence of salmonella. Forced molting is no good for the birds, and is obviously not healthy for humans.

Sincerely,

Delia K. Uherec

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98N 1230

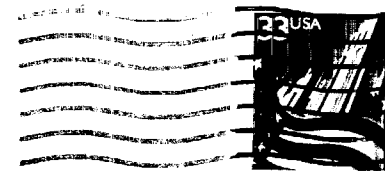
C 517

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
CROSS REFERENCE SHEET

Docket Number/Item Code: 98N-1230/C517

See Docket Number/Item Code: 97P-0197/C518
96P-0418/C517

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